794 778 B. In the chief's residence, there are replicas of the axe and the altars. According to the needs, they are transported to the shore of the Niger, into the fields, or to the public square during the ceremonies. The originals, on the other hand, remain sheltered from the looks of outsiders and risks of impurity. Moreover, the chief owns a special altar, the kworę ni, "soul of the kworę," /168/ which contains the spiritual principles of the members who do not belong to the Komo society. The kworę ni is placed upon the chest of a dying man and receives his soul at the moment of death as does the nimara boli of the Komo (1). It is regularly saturated with rainwater.

C. The stone of the kworę, of which the lower part is crudely carved into seven teeth called kworę fara ni, is stuck into the ground after the following objects have been buried in this site. (See Fig. 13)

1. Three thunder stones called: fara ba, "big stone"; /169/ fara bye, "stone point"; fara joli, "blood of stone." These recall the presence of Faro's power, rain, under the altar. When placing them, the following words are repeated seven times: "Help us" (1)!

1. A ka demme.

2. Three whips, the male number, testimony to the course of men who withstand the pain of the strokes without complaining. When they are buried the following words are spoken: "Let us be courageous" (2).

2. A ka farina.

3. A kongobwona axe (see p. 160) which recalls the ancestors' victory over famine; it announces harvests and future wealth.

Drawings are made on the stone during the annual ceremony. In the center, a black dot called faro dẽzo, "womb of Faro," represents the spirit. It is framed by two series of three whips, each "to defend him," as well as by the first three of the eight ancestors (one of which was Koumabana) and by seven figures representing the members.

[F184] 794 785 Woman is the taboo of the Kworè. Only males may approach the sanctuary and the altars. Any circumcised male desiring to participate in the ceremonies must be initiated. The postulants are brought together by the chief under the Kworè tree, at the foot of which a fire is lit; each carries a twig of fiuãna wood. They suffer

uncomplainingly the burns inflicted upon them with a torch and they whip themselves vigorously. The chief next teaches them the role of the Kworè spirits, the rituals celebrating them, and the symbolic value of the objects of the cult.

Some of the members are designated to take the role of kworè duga during the ceremonies. Masked and waving freshly cut branches in each hand, they mount a wooden horse, the kworèduga so (1). Thus

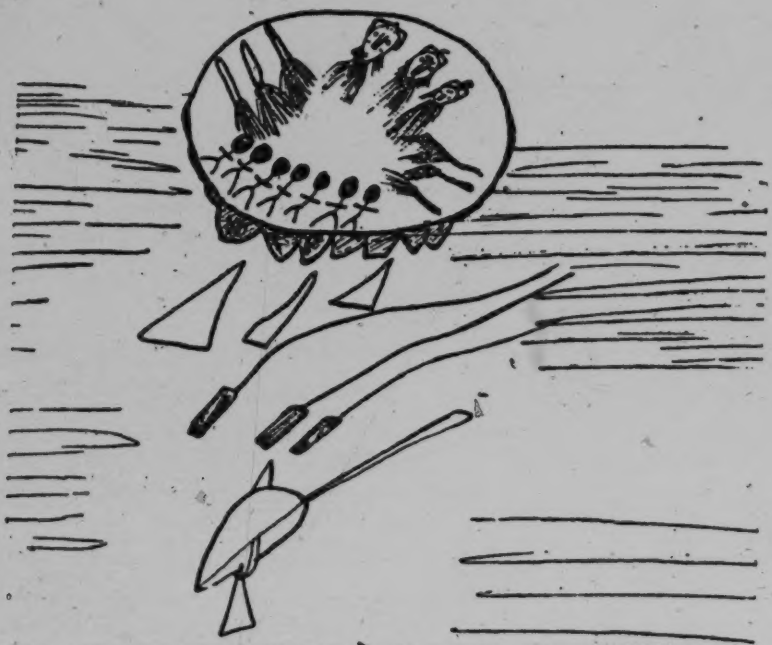

Fig. 13 —Stone altar of the Kworè of Banankoroni under which are buried three neolithic axes, three whips, the ritual iron axe, kongobwona. The drawing, made in the course of the annual ceremony, represents the first three of the eight ancestors who received the word, the members of the society, and the Kworè whips; the black spot is the "womb of Faro." (Drawing by an informant)

1. The kworè duga (literally, vulture of the Kworè), also called togoro koya, "jesters," are as their name indicates, jesters who have the right to joke about

789 as an imitation of Faro who has only one lower limb. The altar, which
796 is placed in the sanctuary by the chief who enters it walking backwards,
794 receives as an offering a little water from the Niger in which thunder stones have been soaking since the night before to be "refreshed." The same libation is made on the kwore boli. After returning to the home of the chief of the Komo, libations of millet mash are poured upon the walls of his house; then, in the name of Faro, the nimara boli, and the Kworè, the throat of a white ram is cut; the flesh of the animal will be thrown into the river, at the conclusion of the ceremonies.

794 (c) At the end of the winter season the "anniversary of the Kworè"
796 is celebrated; its purpose is to commemorate the action of the spirits during the preceding season in order to obtain rain water.

On the fixed day, members of the society, wearing loincloth and carrying in their left hand a whip made of macerated and twisted grass, and in their other hand a torch of burning straw, gather near the tree around which they circle and sing to "gather up the Kworè." [785] The cracking of whip lashes which they give each other represents thunder claps; the beating of the drum which accompanies their songs imitates its rumbling. The burns which they inflict upon themselves recall those which the spirits endure in the celestial combats. They next direct their steps toward the public square where the villagers have gathered and where the spirit they have supposedly invoked by their mimicry is leading them. When all have gathered, the kworeduga, who represent the spirits mounted on their winged horses ready to fly into combat, appear dressed in their traditional costumes and riding their wooden horses.

They advance while dancing and singing verses which are then taken up by a chorus of the members. The latter having formed a [785] circle, the chief places himself in the center, whipping himself, burning himself, and pretending to swallow the fire of his torch. When he is weary he stops and the members take turns to imitate him. Powder made from ground pepper is blown into the dancers' eyes to recall the burning heat of the fiery heavens.

The kworeduga, who have by then put down their wooden horses, set their foot on the earth ready for the fight, after having seized some green tree branches. They put out the fire which has caught onto the clothing of the dancers and participants. This gesture recalls the action of the wind which, in space, put out the hot fire that

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2. E mõ ñõ tasuma, ñe e ɲu kulu la kɛ dla,
dugu nimara ba ke, i kã kla kelenyõ na,
tasuma (ter).

Then he draws, as on the ancestors' caps, a black dot which represents the womb of women as well as Faro. The latter will help men by giving them water, for without his help "none, not even the Kworè, have the rain necessary for agriculture.

Three small figures represent the three responsible chiefs of the Kworè who are subjected to the fire rites and who withstand with courage for the common welfare all the sufferings and burns. The other members are represented by four silhouettes to indicate their inferior position by a feminine number. The entire grouping of personages and torches converges on the black dot to show that "the men by their feet and the torches by their fire throw back their nyama toward him."

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When the drawings are finished, all the participants in turn place their little finger and then their tongue on them to abandon the nyama of the year and to receive new forces. The women use the same gestures as the men but repeat them four times. Each person then receives, respectively, three /209/ or four lashes of the whip on his back so as to integrate properly within him these new elements (3).

3. The little finger acts upon the nyama
of the body, and the tongue upon the nyama
of words.

The children, led by their mothers, are the objects of similar attentions. The boys press their toes upon the stone; the little girls present their genitals to it to prove their femininity. All are then seated in turn on the stone so that the old nyama leaves them through the anus. Then, they are lifted up above it by their parents and "are shaken in all directions to settle properly the newly received nyama in them." The mothers pass their hands over the fact of their children and then over their own, a gesture which binds them to their offspring for the year to come.

The assembly goes to the Kworè stone where the cardinal points are renewed by brandishing lighted torches to the west, north, south, and then east. Each person apologizes for the faults committed during

796 783 the year. The men in turn each place their right foot on the stone and turn in succession toward the cardinal points, inhaling deeply with open mouth and extended tongue as though "to breathe them in."

[785] The women do the same, but place their middle finger on the stone; at the same time they receive four whip lashes on the back so as to "sustain (1) the change of the cardinal points with pain."

1. The more familiar term, "to receive" would be a better translation.

With heads lowered and hands at their back, the sick persons would present to the stone those parts of their bodies which are the source of their sufferings, saying: "Here is the evil that is in my flesh" (2), for

2. Nka soko la ba na fle ninye.

the stone is both responsible for and a depository of illness. The one-eyed and blind show their closed eyes. The cripples place their affected limb upon it. Then the initiated elders, completely naked, encircle the stone while recting a formula in the ancient language (3).

3. Dede kumbeyde mala kay kapo kumbey de malado. This text would mean: "stone mistress of all, fear nothing, your children are there."

Next, the young men run around it rapidly rotating their right arms with closed fists. By this gesture, they are asking the stone to help them find a wife. The young girls follow them, walking in their footsteps, a gesture of docility which also expresses their desire to marry.

The ceremony ends with beer drinking which lasts three days. Each person is happy and gay at having "renewed" his soul; the young people will marry and children will be conceived.

857 796 [572] companion whom each n-Tomo-den' is required to choose upon his admission into the sect; she is his special girl friend and his relations with her are not merely platonic.

857 796 ●785 The meal is over by mid-afternoon, and the band returns to the village for a public performance during which the members beat one another. First, the n-Tomo-tigi and his syere advance to the middle of a circle of onlookers, relatives, friends, and others; the mothers wrap cloths or scarves around their hips and stomachs to protect them from serious injury. Onlookers sing and clap their hands. The n-Tomo-tigi holds his whip aloft with his arms outstretched, and the syere immediately flogs his head and shoulders, front and back, his thighs, legs, and feet; he keeps this up, the victim uttering not a single cry of pain, until he can strike no longer, either because he is exhausted or because his whip is broken.

Then it is the turn of the syere to be flogged in the same way. Following this, the n-Tomo-den' in pairs flog each other until it is the turn of the very youngest who, being less hardened, weep and scream and run away at the first blow. This naturally gives rise to laughter and mockery among the onlookers, who had greatly admired the stamina of the others.

In some places each n-Tomo-den' flagellates himself.

What is the meaning of this practice? It seems likely that originally its purpose was to emphasize the secrecy required of the n-Tomo-den' by giving them a chance to show that they would not violate [240] their oaths even under blows. It should be recalled that flogging was the common method of obtaining confessions, always considered the best proof of guilt. Thus, the practice of flagellation would to some extent enable the adepts not to confess under blows (1). The practice is also a

1. Flagellation is also practiced in certain brotherhoods for no apparent reason except that of hardening one against pain. See "The Koré" below.

means of preparing the boys to undergo circumcision without flinching, since it is a signal disgrace to show or expose pain at that time.

794 of Kore-dyuga-tigi and has the same meaning.-

most part strangely accoutered dancers, each of whom dresses [301] as his fancy dictates. As ornaments, the Kor'dyuga wear strings of beautiful red beans, which are inedible, called n-go ble. These beans are about the size of a large dragée and throughout the western Sudan are used as protection against evil spirits. [292] These dancers have a leader, the Koro-duga-tigi or Kor'dyuga-tigi, who is further distinguished by a kind of cloak made entirely of bits of reed stalks. On his head he wears a conical hat made of the same reeds, and in his hand he carries a long wand from which hang birds' skulls, packets of sorghum straw, gourd stems, etc. In addition to the dancers, the clergy is accompanied by [785] flagellants (bisa-tyi-la), torchbearers (ta-tugu-la-n-tigi), and people who lash themselves with bundles of thorns (the ngoni-sa-ma-u).

[534] Of course, the Kore has its orchestra, which includes drums (denu-ba), a kind of castanet (kinge), and gourds filled with seeds or pebbles (nkude) and pierced with holes.

794 The cult has the usual ceremonies, with the two great festivals at the times of planting and harvesting. On these oc-796 casions the Kore-tigi officiates, as the nyana-n-son-na-ba does with respect to nyana dugu-da-siri. He makes the offerings, performs the sacrifices, and sets forth the requests at the foot of the sacred tree, after having thanked the god-protector. The kara and the Kore-kongolo are sprinkled with the blood of the victims; thus, the manes and the nyana of the boli are honored simultaneously.

[764] There is always a meeting of the brotherhood when a Kore-de dies. There are offerings, sacrifices, and communion with all the offerings, which require one or more days of orgies to be consumed, depending on the importance of the deceased, because elders in [282] important posts like that of nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc., are particularly honored at their death.

Young men are admitted only once every seven years, and it is at this time that the ceremonies are most elaborate.

794 process, let loose a rain of sparks which the Kore-duga zealously
796 put out with leafy branches. Then each dancer, carrying what
786 is left of his torch, kneels before the drums, making an obscene gesture which arouses the laughter of the onlookers and giving the cries, roars, or laugh of the "wild beasts." Elsewhere, the nyoni-sa-ma are roaming among the drinkers, tearing at themselves with thorns. Flagellants lash themselves with switches
● [785] that leave cuts from which the blood flows. They stiffen themselves against the pain and keep up this cruel sport, which once again the Kore-duga mitigate by binding up the wounds.

There appears to be no doubt that during these orgies the most shameful excesses are committed without the slightest restraint.

The Nya

794 This brotherhood is highly esteemed in all the Bambara villages in the cantons of Say and Karadougou. It is less common in the canton of Séladougou; in the canton of Saro, five-sixths of the villages are loyal to it. It is rarely found in Nyansannari, and outside these areas in the circle of Djenné, there are only a few scattered Nya brotherhoods in the Bendougou and Ségou areas.

The cult arose in the Bendougou region. As has been
[443] noted above, the villages of Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali, etc., are market villages where all the boli are found, together with directions for using them.

778 The boli of the Nya consists of a piece of wood from 25
794 to 30 centimeters in length and from 10 to 15 centimeters in height and width. It is wrapped in an absorbent material, usually cotton. The blood of the victims and the liquid of the libations are poured on this boli, and then hairs or feathers and bits of entrails, eggs, and kola nuts are stuck to it, giving it a
[281] repulsive appearance. It is true that the boli is often concealed from inquisitive eyes by putting it in a container made of an old piece of the hide of a she-goat. However, since the container is given the same treatment as the boli it contains, it is just as disgusting.

85 his "sister of the heart." In fact, on the day of his admission to the
796 n'tomo every small Bambara chooses a n'golo mouso to whom he gives a small gift each year. The dreadful part of this custom is that in Bambara country the n'golo mouso is less prudish than the girl friend or sweetheart of a little French boy and is often a little maid-of-all-work who lends herself without qualms to unhealthy and indecent play.

After the feast, which takes about three hours, the n'tomo déou (sons of the n'tomo) leave the place of sacrifice and return to the village in Indian file, preceded by drums. D'lo, or millet beer, awaits them, but before touching the divine liqueur they must perform a bloody rite. It is hideous, and yet, it is the high point and chief attraction of the celebration!

852 On the public square, in front of drums that give the measure
796 and beat the rhythm, the young n'tomo déou flagellate themselves,
●785 usually until they bleed. The old men run up, dragging their mats after them; the women, squatting on their tiny stools, clap their hands and sing; and mothers wrap the loins of their children in long white scarves to protect their lower abdomens from misdirected blows. The n'tomigi and his siéré -- honor to whom honor is due -- go into the arena, and while the little leader holds his switch above his head with both hands, /112/ the siéré beats him hard with his own switch on the back chest, calves, soles of his feet, and everywhere. When he is tired of beating or his switch breaks, he stops and the leader in his turn gives a round to his aide. In this way, two by two, according to age and size, the children flagellate (1) each other. The flick, flack

1. In Bani country each child flagellates himself. Although that is not the usual custom, it may be encountered in many villages.

of whip lashes, which cause blood to spurt, bruise the flesh, and always leave a furrow as wide as a thumb, may often be heard for hours. Little boys of six or seven years often stop at the second blow to scratch their backs and open their mouths to cry, but I have seen some stay unmoved just like their elders of ten to twelve years, without a

852 tear, a complaint, or a cry of pain, and they are so imperious that
796 one might think they were of bronze.
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The N'golo, the Special Fetish of the Circumcised

852 The children of this fetish, whose function I explained in the
794 preceding chapter, grant themselves many days of celebration in its honor in the course of the year. The main festival, however, is annual and in addition to the dégé, a hen, and two kola nuts offered by each initiate, a goat is sacrificed on behalf of all.

Since it is from this fetish that the fla-n-to organization derives its existence, its members, the to-n-déou, offer drink and food to the whole village for two or three days. The women, too, contribute their share to this horrible drinking bout, and their queen (fama, massa) -- humbling herself before the to-n-tigi, head of the fla-n-to and priest of the n'golo, who thoughtlessly wastes the produce of the field worked by his subjects in the winter -- distributes many kola nuts and adds still more to the d'lo, which already flows in streams.

The beer is drunk out of doors on the public square, and everyone -- men, women, and children -- is there, shouting, dancing, and getting drunk. Seated under a goua, a shed covered with coarse
[346] mats, /113/ and surrounded by his acolytes (the siéré, the djéli, and the djalatiké), the to-n-tigi sits in the place of honor, and it is he who directs the drinking and the dances. He is really king on these days, and all obey him at the slightest sign, gesture, or word. When he gets up to romp or take a turn before the drums, he is honored; all the initiates call "you you," shake their caps (ban fla), and compete as to who will take his gun, spear, stick, or ax and beat the time for the dance. But he wants to speak; he must speak; he feels the need to issue an order, to give thanks, or to impose a light fine on his band; and his spokesman runs to his side. He repeats the speech of his chief word for word and sentence by sentence, and sometimes even adds a comment of his own, for some Bambara have a sharp wit and very easily find a saying to bring a laugh.

794 colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does
796 not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others
292 ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and
522 kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

794 The bisatjila (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in
796 the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the
[185] ta tougoula (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower their bare backs with sparks. The djara (lions) or sogo (beasts, animals) with masks even larger than those of the souroukou (hyenas) growl around the n'goni sama (1), also called wara (fearless wild animals).

1. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to kill for oneself."

The soula run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the kârâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything becomes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn lasts. On rising, they say: "Djanté koré déou djanté (djanté children
[535 of the djanté koré), djanté ma (man of the djanté)," and each dances
731] the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

794 796 korédé ("sons of koré"), and in all the province of Ségou, wherever a sacrifice is offered to the fetish, they may go into the sacred grove without any fear and take part in the mysteries. They have the password -- "djanté ma, man of djanté," and will know how to answer when interrogated by the souroukou (group of the hyena).

794 796 782 After the initiation the koretigi (priest of koré) proceeds with sacrifices. Everything happens as at the dasiri: after the libations of /millet/ flour (dégé) and beer (d'lo), the trunk of the sacred tree is reddened with blood, and all around the blood are tufts of fur and feathers stuck to the bark by remainders of chewed kola nut. A hyena mask called koré koungolo ("head /tête/ of koré") is also reddened with blood, as is the kâra, the emblem of the genie which is used as an altar for deceased initiates. Part of the meat is taken to the village, and the rest is grilled on the spot and eaten without any seasoning whatever.

In the sacrifices, koré and those that form its court are asked to watch over the harvest so that it may be abundant, to watch over the flocks so that they may thrive, to provide the petitioners with their fill of food and drink all their lives, and to give them a vigorous old age, etc., and all this is requested for one sole purpose: "so that we may be able to enjoy a woman and devote ourselves to carnal pleasures."

794 796 After the repast the crowd abandons itself to the dance, and until morning there is an indescribable uproar and endless shouting. At daybreak they go to the public square, and as long as the beer (d'lo) lasts /125/ the orchestra makes bedlam in front of the drinkers who squat around full gourds, and the women sit on mats or tiny stools piled on top of each other, clap their hands, and answer the obscenities of the korodouga with further obscenities.

[535] The dance of the groups, in which all members, young and old, take part, consists of more or less comical contortions which they execute going around in a circle, one behind the other. The old men tire quickly and their throats soon get dry, so they are not slow to sit down and get drunk to please koré, and the young people then abandon themselves and dance to their hearts' content.

794 796 785 Two or three tatougoula, a flaming torch in each hand, open the dance. They scorch their backs, chests, and armpits, and

794 thousands of sparks rain onto their heads and bare bodies, and smoke
796 and sizzle on their skins before going out. The korodouga, armed with
785 leafy branches, chase the sparks. They devote themselves chiefly to their obscene songs; their minds on the perforated gourds which they shake furiously, and more than one dancer feels himself getting roasted. And when the torches are almost burned out the tatougoula squat before the big drum and for the last time shake the handful of [522] burning straw that they have left. An obscene gesture provokes a stifled laugh here and there, a "hou hou" from the souroukou, a roar from the djara, a chuckle from the soula, and cries of encouragement from around the gourds: "O do, that's it!"

While the djara /lions/ or sogo /beasts/, /wearing/ huge masks roar around the groups of drinkers, the ng'oni sama or wara tear their chests and their armpits with brushes of thorns, and the soula, grimacing and weeping, throw the group of women into confusion and put the children to flight. As to the bisatjila, they circle like lions in a cage, uttering wild animal cries and trying to excite themselves. Suddenly, as if seized by fury, they brandish their long, flexible whips. These whirl for a moment above their heads, whistle in the air, and then slap the flesh. The men strike hard; each blow leaves its mark or furrow, and /126/ blood often flows. They pale and tremble in all their limbs under the pain, but in spite of everything they strike and strike, for the instrument of torture must be worn to shreds and fly to pieces. At every blow of the whip the korodouga band throw themselves onto the victim and massage and rub him, and the souroukou lose themselves in indecent behavior in front of the great drum.

794 In addition to the sacrifice offered every seven years, there are
796 annual sacrifices to the koré, to the shades of its priests, the korétigi,
782 and finally to the shades of its initiates, the korédé. There is always
764 a sacrifice at the death of an initiate; the groups dance the sacred dance, and for three nights there is the shouting and the indescribable bedlam in the koré tou ("grove of the koré") of which I have told.

794 If the deceased initiate was an old man, a graybeard, he has
764 completed his whole career and his fellow-members come in great numbers to pay him their respects. Before the corpse, which is laid out under the trees which shade the entrance of the village, they

881 as ugly as possible, and plays the fool. Armed with a long stick -- the stick which is used to stir the gruel that is simmering on the fire (1) -- she darts out of the village, agile as a gazelle. Her companions

[445]

1. To-n-galama: a stick with a large, flattened end, used to stir gruel in the pot.

all chase her at a full run, giving many shouts; they circle around the walls four times. At every fork in the path they form a circle, dance with frenzy, and throw large handfuls of basi and smoked fish sauce to the spirits without keeping count. "Dégé dounlé, idiots," shouts the smeared girl, and all her retinue repeats with ever increasing enthusiasm: "Nalouma, big fool...." And this day, which is not very edifying, is full of delights for the little Bambara girls who are to be excised.

The little soli boys are satisfied with sacrificing to n'tomo, a good fetish which is their protector, but although they dance wearing masks with six, seven, and sometimes eight horns, they do not flagellate themselves, or at least flagellation is not required on this day.

[785]

2. The Soli Si Festival, or the Vigil of the Circumcised

Here we are on the eve of the circumcision! It is black night, d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer, hums and foams in the earthenware bowls, and a thin mist comes out of all the huts and envelops them. Here karité grease sputters as it melts in the pot and browns the skin of a chicken or the leg of a goat; there one hears the loud laughter of people with full stomachs, the hiccups of a glutton, the dry and decisive sound of two heavy lips releasing five great /178/ sticky fingers glued to each other by a remainder of gruel. Their foreheads decorated with beads in a kind of crown of white, red, and yellow, the colors of the rainbow, and their bodies draped in blankets, Roman style, groups of women glide silently like shadows along the alleys, carrying on their heads huge gourds full of dégé, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk.

[301 291]

764 782 which is nothing less than disguised slavery. In the presence of a European the Negroes like to complain that he cannot meet their taxes, but they should not be listened to too closely -- 99 times out of 100 they are lying! Let us not make war against the military or civil official responsible for levying the tax, which is not at all exorbitant; let us think before all about the boli and their staffs, a band of persons without principles or law, human vultures with greedy fingers who attack the weak, the widows and orphans, terrify them with their threats of death. They do not leave these people in peace until they have taken everything: hens, goats, dogs, cowrie shells, sorghum, and often freedom.

6. Respects Paid to Initiates of the Koré, or Koté

794 766 The initiates of a fetish are never indifferent to the death of a brother, and they hasten to find a hen and a kola nut with which to prove their attachment to the deceased and to assuage the wrath of the god. The sect of koré does things in a grand, even in a ceremonious, manner, if there is any ceremony in those nocturnal orgies where d'lo, or millet beer, is drunk to /229/ the point of senselessness, and where lascivious and obscene dances are danced.

When a young man who is koré dé (son of koré, initiate of the [778] sect) dies, relatives and friends redden with blood the sacred tree and the kara, a perforated board painted red and white, which is the genie's emblem. Although there is general mourning in the village, tears are dried when evening comes, and for three nights there is nameless [785] bedlam and endless shouting in the kore tou (the sacred grove) as initiates flagellate themselves, burn their backs with torches, tear their bodies with thorns, abandon themselves to their barbaric dances, [534] and lose themselves in lewd gestures in front of the dénouba (drums measuring from one to one and a half meters) and the kingé (a triangle, an iron tube, which is hung from the thumb of the left hand and which is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger).

For the old people who are granted not a tear nor a regret but for whom there are dances and songs, fellow initiates come in large numbers, and during the night preceding the burial, they make a

794 bedlam and racket in front of the corpse, which is displayed under the
766 great trees that shade the entrance of the village. That is a most lugubrious and macabre rite! After the burial for three successive nights, the same respects are paid to the deceased in front of the fetish tree in the koré tou (sacred grove), and if the deceased was a koretigi (head of the sect of koré), a gnéna-n-sonnaba (head of the village and priest of the dasiri), a bolitigi (master of a boli), a flélikéla (famous sorcerer), a gouatigi (family head), a souroukou tigi or a korodouga tigi (head of a group in the sect (1)), they often continue

1. See my chapter on the koré, or koté.

their orgies for eight days running, gorging themselves with d'lo (beer), and getting drunk.

794 The anniversaries of the old people, those who had fame,
769 authority, and especially authority in the sect, are observed regularly every year, and on that day there is a memorial to members of the family who belonged to the sect. Youths in large numbers come from all directions to abandon themselves to barbaric dances, and since beer flows in streams, the drinking bout that takes place is indescribable. /230/ Only a family reduced to the blackest poverty would neglect to offer d'lo (millet beer).

794 On the morning that follows these dances in honor of a deceased
769 koré dé, a saraka is placed with great ceremony at the dankoun ba (1)
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1. Dankoun, a corner of land formed by two paths that cross; dankoun ba, "great dankoun," the dankoun most popular in the village.

of the village. It consists of the remains of the torches of the tatougoula (2), the bent, broken, and unraveled whips of the bisatjila

2. Tatougoula, those who dance with fire.

(3), the thorn brooms of the woni sama (4), and finally the leafy branch

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3. Bisatjila, those who flagellate themselves.

4. Woni sama, those who scratch themselves with thorns.

used by the korodouga (5) to drive away the sparks crackling on the

5. Korodouga, clowns, storytellers /griots/ of the sect.

backs of the tatougoula.

7. Burial of the Excommunicated

766 Those with sores, lepers, and persons killed by a fétish who did not accept their sacrifice may be said to be excommunicated. No [826] adult who dies without hair on his head or body has the right to the honor of a Bambara burial, and he is given that of lepers.

A leper is never buried in the common cemetery; he is sent far off into the bush to a separate place. The more usual custom, actually, is to slip the corpse into a hollow baobab (Adansonia digitata) with a small, live pullet as companion -- or an egg, if the deceased is a girl. The same fate befalls a bald person.

The reason for this custom is that this class of people have been abandoned by the Creator and the spirits, all of whom scorn them and withdraw from them. If ever the ground where ancestors rest should receive the remains of one of these accursed ones, their bones would shake with disgust. Moreover, they would take revenge for having to rest near people who during their lifetime were without hair; they would be deaf to every prayer and would refuse every sacrifice. The village and the entire region there would suffer a total lack of rain, a drought without any equal, in short, a famine with all its horrors. /231/

4: Henry--269 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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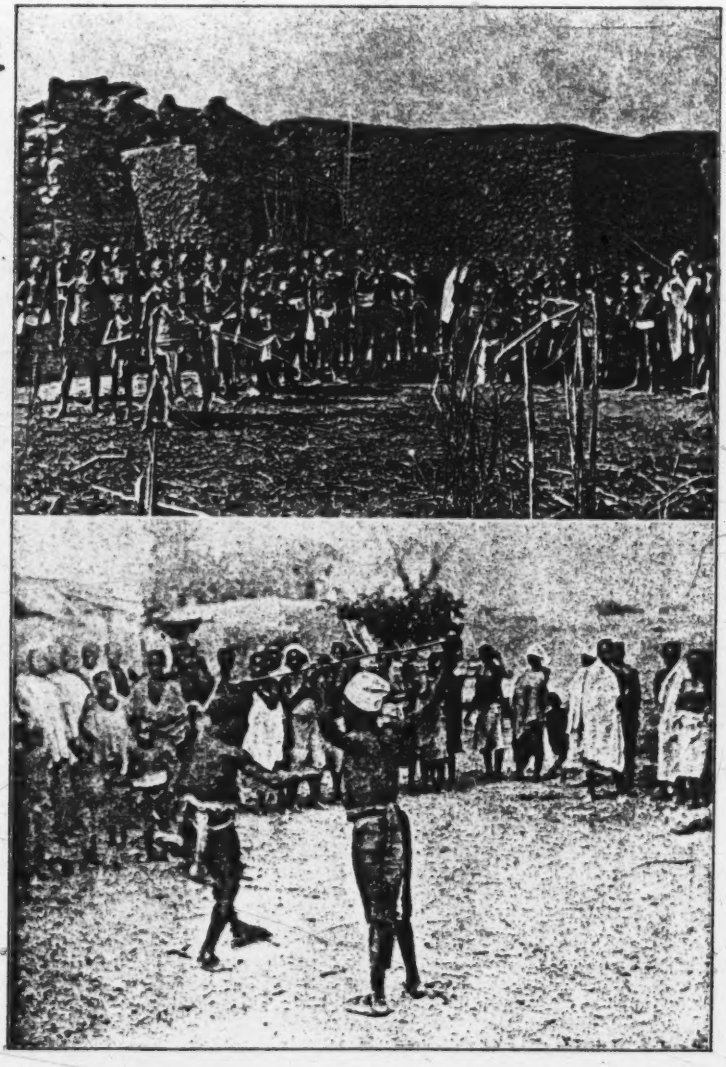

Festival of the N'tomo.
Flagellation of children.

Above: Festival of N'tomo.
Before the flagellation.